

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

"Violating the Flag on the Great Highway of Nations"

Madison to Congress: June 1, 1812

O h, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that Star-Spangled Banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Standard: II. Time, Continuity, and Change
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
IX. Global Connections

Grade Level: 9-12 (*Note: Interpretation, analysis, and creativity*)

Objectives: The student will:

- Explain who supported war and who did not
- Describe the conflicts the peace negotiators faced
- List the priorities Madison gave to a war and determine if these objectives were met
- Write a new verse to the national anthem and weave it into an essay on "Wrapping a country in its flag" (nationalism)

Time: 1½ class periods

Materials: Documents: **1812** *Madison's War Message to Congress*
1814 *The Treaty of Ghent*
Exercises: *An Action Report for War and Peace*
Wrapping a Nation in Its Flag
Resources: *Additional verses to "The Star Spangled Banner"*

American flag
Recording of the National Anthem (music only)
Textbooks
Computer internet access

Procedures:

Setting the Stage

The War of 1812 was unusual. Congress debated for two entire weeks before declaring war and even then, the Senate vote was close—19 to 13. Two weeks later, negotiations to end the war began.

But the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war, was one of the most unusual treaties ever. Although it seemingly did everything other than stopping the war, it became known as one of the most popular “peace pacts” ever. Both countries celebrated its 100th anniversary of in 1914–1915.

This lesson is about support for the war and negotiations for the peace. How did President Madison and his commissioners deal with this abrupt change in U.S. foreign policy? What effect did emerging “nationalism” have on all regions of the country?

Procedures: Day One

1. Play the musical version only of our National Anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, as soon as the roll is called. Have students stand.
2. Ask them to write down the first verse of this song written during the War of 1812. Some will struggle and they may confer with each other.
3. Distribute *Madison's War Message* and the exercise, *An Action Report for War*. Allow the students to work together in small groups to fill in the information sheet. Some research will be needed.
4. After the student groups complete their sheets, have them confer with another group to see if the data collected needs adjusting or improving.
5. Distribute the document, *The Treaty of Ghent*. Each group should note what the country gained in the treaty as they read it. Additional information may be added to the back of the action report sheet. They will also need to check the four causes Madison gave for going to war to see if any of these were resolved.
6. As they read the Treaty, hand out *Additional Verses of the Star Spangled Banner* and assign each group a different verse (verses are numbered). Repeat as needed, based on the number of groups.

7. Play the music again. Have each group check to see whether or not they correctly remembered the words to the first verse. The teacher may have to read the verse to them. Then have the students review the verses that are rarely sung.

6. Hand out *Wrapping a Nation In its Flag* and ask each student (as homework) to write an analysis of the events of the War of 1812 and the attempts to negotiate the Treaty of Ghent. Students should write new lines as additional verses to the national anthem. Their verses must fit within the existing meter. (This will be hard and require creativity and encouragement)

Procedures: Day Two

1. Ask for volunteers to read what they have written. Collect the papers and only make positive comments on their creativity and sense of nation. ■